

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGUI 00277 121057Z
ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /009 W
-----121058Z 022099 /22
R 120955Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8262

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FOR AF/C ONLY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EINV, EMIN, CT
SUBJECT: DIAMOND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS

1. OUTSIDE INTEREST IN THE CAE'S DIAMOND RESOURCES SEEMS TO BE ON THE UPSWING. IMPERIAL ADVISOR JOEL BARKAN, HAS INFORMED US OF CURRENT SAG EFFORT TO IDENTIFY NEW DIAMOND DEPOSITS IN THE CAE ACCORDING TO BARKAN A SOUTH AFRICAN GEOLOGIST HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO THE CAE AND IS CURRENTLY MAKING FIELD STUDIES IN THE BERBERATI-CARNOT AREA. IN ADDITION TO SOUTH AFRICAN INTEREST A GROUP OF SYRIAN BUSINESSMEN LED BY ONE ALADIN BAHRI AND ACCOMPANIED BY EX-SENATOR MONTOYA RECENTLY (FEBRUARY 5-8) VISITED BANGUI. THEIR PRIMARY INTEREST WAS ALSO IN THE DIAMOND BUSINESS. BOTH THE SOUTH AFRICAN AND AN AMERICAN GEOLOGIST TRAVELLING WITH BAHRI'S GROUP APPARENTLY BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE UNTAPPED DIAMOND DESPOSITS WHICH THE ESTABLISHED

COMPANIES HAVE NOT EXPLOITED. THESE ARE INITIAL CONCLUSIONS AND WE DO NOT KNOW HOW WELL-FOUNDED THEY ARE. (FURTHER DETAILS HAVE BEEN POUCHED TO AF/C).

2. COMMENT: THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS FOR THE FUTURE OF SCED \$ DDI'S INVESTIMETNTS IN THE CAE ARE UNCLEAR. BOTH BARKAN AND ALI HEJAZI, ANOTHER IMPERIAL ADVISOR WHO FACILITATED THE MONTOYA VISIT, HAVE TIES WITH DDI'S PRINCIPAL COMPETITORS IN BANGUI. IN ORDER
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TO PROMOTE THEIR OWN INTERESTS, THEY MAY BE SEEKING TO INHIBIT RETURN OF SCED BY REVIVING ALLEGATIONS THAT SCED DID NOT MAKE SUFFICIENT EFFORT TO INCREASE PRODUCTION. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO SHARE STME OF THE INFORMATION IN PARA 1 WITH JOLIS. WE UNDERSTAND JOLIS IS CONSIDERING ANOTHER VISIT TO BANGUI IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO SEE EXACTLY WHERE THINGS STAND. VISIT SEEMS APPROPRIATE AT THIS TIME AND WE WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH JOLIS WHILE HE IS HERE.

QUANTON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIAMONDS, INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES, MINING INDUSTRY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 12-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BANGUI00277
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770051-0094
Format: TEL
From: BANGUI
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770247/aaaabplw.tel
Line Count: 63
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 47116ec7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3335887
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DIAMOND INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENTS
TAGS: EINV, EMIN, CT, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/47116ec7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009